

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:BMCKINLEY:MS
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S - AHOUGHTEN
P - MR. TICE
S/S - DANDERSON
NSC - MR. HUNTER (SUB)

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THE SECRETARY'S FAREWELL MEETING WITH ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR GAJA, MARCH 13, 1978 -- ITALIAN POLITICS AND
HIGH LEVEL VISITS

1. DURING HIS FAREWELL CALL ON THE SECRETARY MARCH 13,
ITALIAN AMBASSADOR ROBERTO GAJA DESCRIBED THE NEW ITALIAN
CABINET SWORN IN THE SAME DAY AS A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT
BY PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI WHICH WOULD GUARANTEE A
CONTINUATION OF THE POLICIES AND LOYALTIES OF ITS
PREDECESSOR. GAJA EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT AMERICAN
LEADERS WOULD LOOK UPON THE NEW GOVERNMENT AS THE BEST
POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND WOULD AVOID ANY
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STEP THAT CALLED ATTENTION TO CHANGES WHICH HAD OCCURRED
IN THE PARLIAMENT OR INDICATED WE MIGHT BE BACKING AWAY
FROM THE FULL SUPPORT WE HAD GIVEN ANDREOTTI IN THE PAST.
GAJA PREDICTED THE FOURTH ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT WOULD
LAST OUT THE YEAR, BUT ADDED THAT EARLY PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS, PRECIPITATED BY COMMUNIST DEMANDS FOR A
GREATER SHARE OF POWER, WOULD PROBABLY PROVE UNAVOIDABLE

BY NEXT APRIL. THE RESULTS OF THOSE ELECTIONS WOULD
DEPEND PRIMARILY ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY AT THAT
TIME, HE SAID.

2. IN THE INTERESTS OF REAFFIRMING THE EXISTING
EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND
BECAUSE OF THE HIGH SYMBOLIC VALUE NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS
ATTACH TO IMMEDIATE CLOSE CONTACTS WITH THE UNITED STATES,
GAJA SAID ANDREOTTI HAD ASKED HIM TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILI-
TY OF OUR EXTENDING TO THE NEW PRIME MINISTER AN IN-
VITATION TO PAY AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN APRIL.

3. WITHOUT RESPONDING DIRECTLY, THE SECRETARY TOLD GAJA
HE SHOULD BE AWARE BUT SHOULD NOT REPORT TO HIS GOVERN-
MENT AS A FIRM POSSIBILITY THAT WE WERE CONSIDERING A
VISIT TO EUROPE BY THE PRESIDENT IN JUNE OR EARLY JULY.
THE SECRETARY CAUTIONED GAJA, THAT OUR PLANNING WAS IN-
CHOATE AND "PROBLEMATICAL" BUT ADDED THAT ITALY MIGHT BE
INCLUDED IN THE ITINERARY IF THE VISIT TOOK PLACE. GAJA
SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD OF COURSE BE MOST WELCOME
BUT REPEATED THAT HE THOUGHT THE SPECIAL GESTURE OF AN
INVITATION TO ANDREOTTI ALSO DESIRABLE.

4. COMMENT. THE ABOVE IS FYI ONLY. THE IDEA OF AN
OFFICIAL VISIT IN APRIL IS A NON-STARTER AND, IF
THE ITALIANS MENTION IT, EMBASSY SHOULD SAY NOTHING
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TO ENCOURAGE HOPES OF AN INVITATION. VANCE

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